

TOWN OF LANESBOROUGH SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Submitted by Diane Stevens, Town Secretary

January 6, 2016

Present: Mr. John Goerlach, Chair
Mr. Robert Ericson
Mr. Henry Sayers
Mr. Paul Sieloff, Town Manager

Warrants: Warrant Signed

The meeting was opened by John Goerlach at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of survey to Town residents

Robert Barton came before the Board regarding a proposed survey to Town residents. Mr. Barton's stated that he has a Master's Degree in Business from Stanford University and has worked on many surveys for different businesses and entities including Williams College. Mr. Barton stated that his proposed survey brought in questions that he believed were relevant to the high school building project which addresses taxpayers concerns. Mr. Barton stated that this will give the Board an understanding of what the residents want and will guide the Town leaders on how to move forward. Mr. Barton believed then entire survey process will cost less than \$2,500. Ann Stevens asked the Board who will compose the survey and collect its data. Mr. Goerlach stated that the Board and other Town employees will collect the data. Mrs. Stevens disagrees with Town employees collecting data. Renee Schiek asked who would control the originals so they cannot be duplicated. Mr. Barton stated that the surveys will be printed on special paper or be numbered so as not to be duplicated. Christine Galib asked how the Board will pay for the survey. Mr. Goerlach stated that it has yet to be determined. Mr. Goerlach asked Mr. Sieloff how it can be funded. Mr. Sieloff stated that the way the proposed survey is written, Town funds cannot be used. Mr. Goerlach asked if it can be privately funded. Mr. Sieloff stated that it could be. Mr. Ericson stated that he believed the proposed survey was heavily weighted and thinks this should be determined at a Town meeting. Mr. Goerlach reminded Mr. Ericson that the Board agreed to try to get a poll of Town residents, many of who do not attend Town meetings. Mr. Barton liked the idea of a Town meeting but wanted to know what types of questions would be placed on the Warrant. Mr. Barton also stated that the survey would be good way to see what residents thought beforehand. P.J. Panesco asked Mr. Barton how many surveys he expects will be returned. Mr. Barton stated approximately 25%, which would be 400-500. Mr. Panesco asked how a determination could be made with such a low percentage. Mr. Sayers told those in attendance that the survey is just a feeler but ultimately the decision would be made at a Town Meeting or vote. Mr. Panesco stated that he would like the Board to agree that they would support the building project if the survey comes back with that result. Raymond Jones stated that he believed that a Town Meeting vote was not appropriate because people are intimidated at Town Meeting and may not vote the way they would if they have anonymity. Mr. Goerlach told Mr. Panesco that he would get support whatever the residents wished to do. Mr. Goerlach stated that he believes people are frightened of what the survey would produce. Ms. Galib stated that she does not understand why a survey is necessary because everything so far has been in favor of the project. Mr. Barton stated that the survey is to see if people wants to negotiate a better deal on the project with the Regional Agreement which could save the Town millions of dollars. Mr. Barton says that this is an opportunity to see what the residents want to do. Lyndon Moors asked the Board if this survey was the edited version by Siena College. Mr. Sieloff stated that it was not. Mr. Goerlach stated that Richard Cohen had contacted Siena College and now they are no longer willing to work with the Town. Mr. Moors stated that he believed that the introductory language was biased and that uneducated people would not understand it as written. Mrs. Cohen stated that her husband was not trying to intimidate anyone by contacting Siena College, that he just believed the survey was biased. Tim O'Brien stated that he is concerned with the imperfection of the survey and wanted to know how residents are going to get their information other than at a Town Meeting. Mr. Goerlach stated there will be a Town Meeting before a vote. Mr. Sayers asked Mr. Sieloff if he a different survey. Ms. Sieloff stated that he did. Mr. Sieloff stated that a Town Meeting in February could be informational only without a vote. Residents in attendance asked if an informational letter could be sent with the survey stating that an informational Town Meeting will be held in February. Mr. O'Brien asked if a non-binding vote could be taken at Town Meeting. Mr. Sieloff gave the Board a different proposed draft survey for their review. Mr. Sieloff believed there is no biases with this draft. Mr. Sieloff reviewed the survey with the Board and stated that the Board would be able to use Town funds with this

version because it is based on regionalization. Attendees generally liked the version Mr. Sieloff presented. Mr. Jones stated that at the Finance Committee last night the proposed increase in taxes if this project proceeds at its present budget would be approximately \$1.81 per thousand. Mr. Terranova stated that this is not a final number. Mr. Goerlach asked the Board their thoughts. Mr. Sayers stated that he liked Mr. Sieloff's version of the survey. Mr. Ericson stated that he also likes Mr. Sieloff's version and the idea of including a newsletter with it informing residents of an upcoming Town Meeting. Mr. Sieloff stated this needs to be approved very soon as it has to be sent to the printer and then mailed out in a timely manner. Superintendent Douglas Diaz wanted to let attendees know that the price of the project is subject to change and it will only go down. Motion 16-001. Motion made by Henry Sayers to accept the survey presented by Mr. Sieloff, seconded by Robert Ericson. Motion carried 3-0.[#1 & #2]

Other business which could not have been reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of the meeting.

None

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Henry Sayers, seconded by Robert Ericson. Motion carried 3-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Footnotes:

[#1] Proposed Survey to Town Residents from Robert Barton

[#2] Proposed Survey composed by Town Manager